

## Our Dwelling-Place.

HORATIO NELSON POWERS.

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."  
Psalm xc. 1.

I seek His dwelling-place. Afar  
I range abysses without bound;  
I touch a sun, I touch a star,  
But nowhere feel the solid ground.  
Darkness in constellated height!  
Darkness in gulfs of stellar sea!  
On, on, and yet no home in sight!  
Where can the gracious refuge be?  
The deep devour my worldless cry:  
Fainting, I feel no friendly shore;  
The myriad worlds go hustling by—  
The voids are colder than before.  
O nameless Good! O Thou in whom  
Is all that was and is to be,  
Is there not in Thy bosom room  
For a poor, houseless wretch like me?  
'Tis warmth and light, 'tis love, 'tis home,  
Rest, calm and sweet, for which I pine:  
From Thee I came, to Thee I come—  
How shall Thy dwelling-place be mine?  
Ah! who is this that takes my hand?  
That lifts me from the pit and mire?  
That heals, consoles, and makes me stand,  
And gives the rest that I desire?  
Dear Son of God! Thy blessed face  
Shows where the hungry souls may flee.  
Thy heart is Home and hiding place,  
And I am satisfied with Thee!  
—The Churchman.

## Bible Expressions and Customs.

## USE OF THE TERM FATHER.

Adam bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handled the harp and organ.—Gen. 4: 20, 21.

In the East the originator of any custom is frequently spoken of as the "father" of that custom; so, also, a man is often described by representing him to be the "father" of some peculiarity which distinguishes him from others. A man of very long beard is called, "the father of a beard." One of the Arabs who accompanied Palmer in his journey across the desert of the Exodus was called "the father of the top-knot," because the lock of hair on top of his head was of unusual size. A celebrated Arab chief was called "the father of the ostrich," because of the fleetness of the favorite horse which he rode. Dr. Thomson was once called by the mischievous young Arabs "the father of a saucepan," because they fancied that his black hat resembled that culinary utensil. When Loftus was in Chaldea his negro cook on one occasion killed two lion cubs. The Arabs, from that time forth, saluted him as "Abu Seba' in," that is, "the father of the two lions."

The name "father" is also applied to beasts or birds, and even to inanimate things. In Egypt the kite is sometimes called "the father of the air," because of its power of flight. An African city was called *Boo Hadgar*, the "father of stone"—that is, a stony city. There is a Turkish coin called "the father of a cannon," because of the representation of a cannon which is upon it.

In like manner Jabal was called "the father of such as dwell in tents," because he was probably the inventor of tents; and Jubal, "the father of all such as handled the harp and the organ," because he invented those instruments.

This use of the term "father" is found, also, in other parts of the Bible. In Isaiah 9: 6, the Messiah is called "the everlasting Father," or "the Father of eternity;" that is, he is the giver of eternal life. In John 8: 44, the devil is called "the father of lies." In Romans 4: 12, Abraham is said to be "the father of circumcision." In 2 Cor. 1: 3, God is called "the Father of mercies." In Eph. 1: 17, God is called "the Father of glory." There is a corresponding use of the word *children*.

## THE USE OF THE TERM BROTHER.

And also brought again his brother Lot. Gen. 14: 16.

In chapter 11: 31, Lot is said to be the nephew not the brother, of Abram. In like manner Jacob told Rachel (Gen 29: 12) that he was her father's brother; whereas, according to Gen. 28: 5, he was the son of her father's sister; that is, her father's

nephew. This elastic use of the word brother is quite common in the East, however strange it may seem to us; yet we have a usage somewhat similar in the application of the term to persons not in any way related to us. We call fellow-countrymen, or fellow-craftsmen, or fellow-churchmen, brothers. The Orientals apply the term to their kinsmen of whatever relation.

## What is a Covenant?

Commonly it is an agreement, or to use a shorter Saxon word, a *bargain*. That is to say, there are two parties to it, each of whom is to *give* something and to *get* something.

But a covenant is not always of this two-sided character. It may be a voluntary engagement or undertaking, given for some sufficient motive, without any expectation of a *quid pro quo*. Readers of Scottish history are familiar with the "covenanters" of the seventeenth century. What was the covenant from which they derived their name? Not a bargain. Not an agreement, except among themselves. "The Solemn League and Covenant," as it was called, was simply a "pledge," publicly taken by multitudes, to oppose, to the death if need be, the introduction of "prelacy" into the Scottish church.

We have God's covenant (promise or pledge) to Noah, but where is Noah's to God? There is no such thing. In fact, if this is a bargain, it is one in which the giving is all on one side, and all the getting on the other. Why, then, was there a covenant at all? Simply because God, in his condescending kindness, desired to make man more fully satisfied of the certainty of his promise. As in Hebrews 6: "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that \* \* \* we might have a strong consolation."

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN.

It looked very much at one time as if God's purpose had been frustrated. The seed of the woman was to conquer the serpent, but in the days of Noah the tempter seemed to have the victory. Even the family of Seth was drawn into the prevailing corruption, and to put an end to the frightful wickedness that filled the earth God had to sweep all away. God, indeed, has triumphed, but where is the triumph of the woman's seed?

No, says God then, man's sin cannot alter my purpose; not one thing shall fail of all that I have spoken; with thee I will establish my covenant.

And so it shall be proved that the serpent has not triumphed. The old promise given in Eden still stands. It is an "everlasting covenant" and shall not be broken. God's covenant with Noah had an outward token or pledge—the rainbow.

But there are other signs or pledges ordained by God which involve something on man's part. Circumcision, the token of the covenant with Abraham, was to be done by man, and symbolized man's putting away of sin. The Sabbath, as the sign of the covenant with Israel (Exod. 31: 16) was to be observed by man. Baptism is a token of man's renunciation of sin and his subjection to God, and the confession of his faith in Christ. The Lord's Supper and Communion a renewal of our faith and hope in the promises of God. In the ordinance of feet washing we acknowledge that while we are servants of God, we are also servants one of another, and is intended as a lesson to teach us equality, love and humility. There is all the more necessity to be reminded of this as there seems to be a growing disposition among us to feel an unbecoming superiority over those whom we consider our inferiors. But for his covenant God chose a sign that should be *self-working*, depending not on any man's doing, but upon his own natural laws. In the rainbow man has no share. Man may forget its meaning—or deny it—but there it is before his eyes, God's own, spontaneous reminder of the spontaneous covenant of his free and unmerited grace.

We do not always see a rainbow when the clouds pour out their rain upon the earth. Why is this? Because the clouds sometimes hide the sun altogether, and without sunshine no rainbow can be formed. But suppose we should get *above* the clouds, when the rainbow would be visible. There

is never rain without a rainbow being visible, if we could only get to the right spot to see it. But God is always above the clouds, and he always sees it!

Is not this the very point brought out in the text: "The bow shall be in the cloud"—not so much that man may see it—but "*I will look upon it*, that I may remember the everlasting covenant!" Wonderful condescension indeed! God stoops, as it were, to have *an aid to his memory*. Who can doubt his promises after that? Especially one great promise about what he will *not* remember. "I will make a NEW COVENANT \* \* \* and their sins and their iniquities will I *remember no more*." The token of the New Covenant is the blood of Jesus Christ.

## Humility.

BY A. A. COBER.

Humility and the world have ever been at variance. Man is naturally vain of his achievements, and not unfrequently the one whose achievements are of least value, is the one to feel the greatest vanity. The greatest minds are the humblest, it is the little snapping cur that does the most barking. The mind that looks inward finds plenty of room for humility, but the one that looks on the outside will soon be filled with pomposity.

The acorn must first send a rootlet downward that it may receive nourishment, before it can spread its branches. The wider spread the fine filaments of the rootlets the higher reach the thousand arms to catch the raindrops and sunbeams, the blessing from above. Thus it is spiritually. The deeper the Christian grows in humility the higher he grows in holiness.

The brightest lights the world ever knew radiated through humility. The most powerful intellects, that history records have felt the weakest. David, a man after God's own heart, considered himself as a beast in his presence. Job, a man of rare piety, said, "my soul is weary of my life. I abhor myself in dust and ashes." Paul, the chiefest of the apostles, willing to do any sacrifice for the Lord Jesus, calls himself "less than the least of all saints." Ezra, a devout priest and leader of the Jews, saw the wickedness of the people and cried out, "O my God, I am ashamed to lift up my face unto thee." Christ, the most exalted of all men was the humblest. He offers rest to the weary and heavy laden, for said he, "I am meek and lowly of heart." He is meek and lowly and will condescend to men of low estate. He receives the approbation of the highest on earth while the hosts of heaven bow down before him, yet his birth, life, teachings and death display the most profound humility. If this King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who has power in heaven and upon earth, condescends to such humility, where does poor frail humanity find room for vain ostentation?

## The Disciples in a Storm.

BY SAMUEL GARVER.

We learn in the Holy word, that the "Disciples" were in a *storm*. They were truly in a storm in the real sense of the word. Then the question comes to our mind, what did the disciples do for protection? The answer is plain, that they went to Christ. And when he saw the earnestness expressed in coming to him for protection, he arose and rebuked the winds. This is a representation in a figurative sense, of what Christ will do for his *followers* now.

We also learn from this (Matthew 8: 23, 28,) that we must go to Christ, or rather call upon him in faith believing, that if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, and if we knock at Mercy's door it shall be opened unto us.

Oh! how often do we feel, that we are covered with waves, and think this world a very queer place, and wonder what will be the next, but let us follow the example given by the disciples, and let us vividly bear in mind that Christ is the Great Physician, and can heal all our diseases, and remedy all our deformities.

We learn still on in this narrative, that the disciples went to Christ and awoke him. But according to the covenant we have with the Father we need not spend any time in looking after Christ, but just call upon him in Faith, and we believe that Christ will rebuke the waves that so often beset us in our pilgrimage heaven-ward.

Homerville, O.